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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to expand the conceptual content of folkloric performance as a communicative phenomenon, as spoken art. Performance is seen as representing an interpretive frame, whose nature may vary. This framing is accomplished through the use of culturally conventionalized metacommunication (communication about communication), which will vary from community to community; the task of ethnography of performance is to uncover these means. The metalanguage employed in the evaluation of performance, and the esthetic standards expressed therein, constitute another essential consideration in the ethnography of performance. The association of performance with particular genres is a significant aspect of the patterning of performance within communities. Another key aspect of performance systems is the manipulation of conventional systems to fashion novel ones. The emergent quality of performance resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants, within the context of particular situations. The three kinds of structure emergent in performance are text, event, and social structure. Finally, performance by its very nature has implications for the creation of social structure in performance. This final consideration opens the way to additional considerations concerning the role of the performer in society. (Author/AM)

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Verbal Art as Performance

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VERBAL ART AS PERFORMANCE*

Introduction[1]

We will be concerned in this paper to develop a conception of verbal art as performance, based upon an understanding of performance as a mode of speaking. In constructing this framework for a performance-centered approach to verbal art, we have started from the position of the folklorist, but have drawn concepts and ideas from a wide range of disciplines, chiefly anthropology, linguistics, and literary criticism. Each of these disciplines has its own distinctive perspective on verbal art, and a long tradition of independent scholarship in its study. From at least the time of Herder, however, there has been an integrative tradition as well in the study of verbal art, manifested in the work of such figures as Edward Sapir, Roman Jakobson, and Dell Hymes, scholars who have operated at an intellectual level beyond the boundaries which separate academic disciplines, sharing an interest in the esthetic dimension of social and cultural life in human communities as manifested through the use of language. The present paper is offered in the spirit of that integrative tradition.

In a recent collection of conceptual and theoretical essays in folklore, assembled to indicate a range of new perspectives in the field, it was emphasized in the Introduction that the contributors seemed to share a common concern with performance as an organizing principle (Bauman 1972a). The term performance was employed there, as it was by several of the contributors to the collection, because it conveyed a dual sense of artistic action -- the doing of folklore -- and artistic event -- the performance situation, involving performer, art form, audience and setting -- both of which are central to the developing performance approach to folklore.

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This usage accorded well with the conventional meaning of the term 'performance,' and served to point up the fundamental reorientation from folklore as materials to folklore as communication which characterized the thinking of the contributors. Conventional meanings can carry scholarship just so far, however, before the lack of conceptual rigor begins to constrain analytical insight rather than advancing it. In view of the centrality of performance to the orientation of increasing numbers of folklorists and anthropologists interested in verbal art,[2] the time seems opportune for efforts aimed at expanding the conceptual content of folkloric performance as a communicative phenomenon, beyond the general usage that has carried us up to this point. That is the purpose of this essay.

One orientational and terminological point before proceeding: consistent with the chiefly sociolinguistic and anthropological roots of the performance approach, the terms 'verbal art' and 'oral literature' provide a better frame of reference, at least as a point of departure for the ideas to be advanced here, than the more diffuse and problematic term 'folklore.' 'Spoken art' might be even better, insofar as this paper is concerned solely with a way of speaking and its attendant phenomena, but the term has never achieved currency in any of the disciplines where it might have served a useful purpose -- folklore, anthropology or linguistics.[3] Many things have been studied under the name of folklore, but verbal art has always been at or near the center of the larger domain, and has constituted the chief common ground between anthropological folklorists and those of other persuasions. Accordingly, the shift from the 'folklore' of the preceding paragraph to the 'verbal art' of those to follow is neither unprecedented nor arbitrary, but will serve, hopefully, to make somehwat clearer the universe of discourse within which the ideas which follow have been formulated.

Let us make explicit as well that a great deal more is intended here than a convenient relabeling of what is already known. The conception of performance to be developed in these pages is not simply an alternative perspective on the familiar genres of oral literature long studied by folklorists and anthropologists. It is that, but it is more than that as well. Performance, as we conceive of it and as our examples have been selected to illustrate, is a unifying thread tying together the marked, segregated esthetic genres and other spheres of verbal behavior into a general unified conception of verbal art as a way of speaking. Verbal art may comprehend both myth narration and the speech expected of certain members of society whenever they open their mouths, and it is performance that brings them together in culture-specific and variable ways, ways that are to be discovered ethnographically within each culture and community.

The Nature of Performance

Modern theories of the nature of verbal art, whether in anthropology, linguistics or literature, tend overwhelmingly to be constructed in terms of special usages or patterning of formal features within texts. General formulations identify a primary 'focus on the message for its own sake' (Jakobson 1960:356, Stankiewicz 1960:14-15) or a 'concern with the form of expression, over and above the needs of communication' (Bascom 1955: 247) as the essence of verbal art. Others are more specific about the nature or consequences of such a focus or concern, suggesting, for example, that the touchstone of verbal art lies in a maximized 'use of the devices of the language in such a way that this use itself attracts attention and is perceived as uncommon' (Havránek 1964:10). Among certain linguists, the idea has some currency that verbal art 'in some way deviates from

norms which we, as members of society, have learnt to expect in the medium used' (Leech 1969:56, cf. Stankiewicz 1960:12, Durbin 1971), while others of their colleagues make a point of the 'multiplicity of additional formal laws restricting the poet's free choice of expressions' (Fónagy 1965:72, italics in the original).

Whatever their differences, of focus or emphasis, all of these approaches make for a conception of verbal art that is text-centered. For all, the artful, esthetic quality of an utterance resides in the way in which language is used in the construction of the textual item. To be sure, it may be considered necessary, at least implicitly, to assess the text against the background of general linguistic norms, but it is the text itself that remains the unit of analysis and point of departure for proponents of these approaches. This in turn places severe constraints on the development of a meaningful framework for the understanding of verbal art as performance, as a species of situated human communication, a way of speaking.

It is, of course, possible to move from artistic texts, identified in formal or other terms, to performance, by simply looking at how such texts are rendered, in action terms. But this is to proceed backwards, by approaching phenomena whose primary social reality lies in their nature as oral communication in terms of the abstracted textual products of the communicative process. As we shall see, oral literary texts, though they may fulfill the formal measures of verbal art, be accurately recorded, and bear strong associations with performance in their conventional contexts, may nevertheless not be the products of performance, but of rendition in another communicative mode. How many of the texts in our collections represent recordings of informants' abstracts, resumés or

reports of performances and performance forms rather than true performances (cf. Tedlock 1972)? By identifying the nature of performance and distinguishing it from other ways of speaking, we will have, among other things, a measure of the authenticity of collected oral literary texts.

A performance-centered conception of verbal art calls for an approach through performance itself. In such an approach, the formal manipulation of linguistic features is secondary to the nature of performance, per se, conceived of and defined as a mode of communication.

There is a very old conception of verbal art as communication which goes back at least to Plato's insistence that literature is lies. This notion, also manifest in Sir Philip Sidney's oft-quoted dictum, 'the poet nothing affirmeth,' (Ohmann 1971:5) holds that whatever the propositional content of an item of verbal art, its meaning is somehow cancelled out or rendered inoperative by the nature of the utterance as verbal art. A more recent expression of this conception is to be found in the writings of the British Ordinary Language philosopher, J.L. Austin. Austin maintains, 'of any and every utterance,' that it will be '<u>in a peculiar way</u> hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage...or spoken in soliloquy.' He continues, 'language in such circumstances is in special ways -- intelligibly -- used not seriously, but in ways <u>parasitic</u> upon its normal use -- ways which fall under the doctrine of <u>etiolations</u> of language' (Austin 1962:21-22, italics in the original).[4]

Leaving aside the unfortunate suggestion that the uses Austin mentions exert a weakening influence on language, a product of his particular bias, we may abstract from the cited passage the suggestion that performance represents a transformation of the basic referential ('serious,' 'normal' in Austin's terms) uses of language. In other words, in artistic

performance of this kind, there is something going on in the communicative interchange which says to the auditor, 'interpret what I say in some special sense; do not take it to mean what the words alone, taken literally, would convey.' This may lead to the further suggestion that performance sets up, or represents, an interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood, and that this frame contrasts with at least one other frame, the literal.

In employing the term 'frame' here, I am drawing not upon Austin, but on the powerful insights of Gregory Bateson, and the more recent and equally provocative work of Erving Goffman. Bateson first developed systematically on the notion of frame as a defined interpretive context providing guidelines for discriminating between orders of message (1972[1956]:222), in his seminal article, 'A Theory of Play and Fantasy' (1972[1955]:177-193). We shall return to aspects of this theory, and of Goffman's, in more detail below.[5]

Although the notion of performance as a frame was introduced above, in connection with Austin's thinking, as contrasting with literal communication, it should be made clear from the beginning that many other such frames besides these two may be identified. For example:

--<u>insinuation</u>, in which the words spoken are to be interpreted as having a covert and indirect relation to the meaning of the utterance (cf. Austin 1962:121);

--<u>joking</u>, in which the words spoken are to be interpreted as not seriously meaning what they might otherwise mean (cf. Austin 1962:121);

--<u>imitation</u>, in which the manner of speaking is to be interpreted as being modeled after that of another person or persona;

--<u>translation</u>, in which the words spoken are to be interpreted as the

equivalent of words originally spoken in another language or code;

--quotation, in which the words spoken are to be interpreted as the words of someone other than the speaker (cf. Weinreich 1966:162).

This is a very partial and unelaborated list, which does not even adequately sample, much less exhaust, the range of possible interpretive frames within which communication may be couched. It should be noted, moreover, that frames may be used in combination, as well as singly, as listed. It should also be stressed that although theorists like Austin suggest that the literal frame somehow has priority over all the others -- is more 'normal' -- this is not necessary to the theory, and in fact biases it in unproductive ways (Fish 1973). The notorious difficulty of defining literalness aside, there is growing evidence that literal utterances are no more frequent or 'normal' in situated human communication than any of the other frames, and indeed that in spoken communication no such thing as naked literalness may actually exist (Burns 1972, Goffman in press). For our purposes, all that is necessary is the recognition of performance as a distinctive frame, available as a communicative resource along with the others to speakers in particular communities.[6]

The first major task, then, is to suggest what kind of interpretive frame performance establishes or represents. How is communication that constitutes performance to be interpreted? The following represents a very preliminary attempt to specify the interpretive guidelines set up by the performance frame.

Fundamentally, performance as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. This competence rests on the knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways. Performance involves on

the part of the performer an assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content. From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the performer is thus marked as subject to evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer's display of competence.[7] Additionally, it is marked as available for the enhancement of experience, through the present enjoyment of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself. Performance thus calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of expression, and gives license to the audience to regard the act of expression and the performer with special intensity.[8]

Thus conceived, performance is a mode of language use, a way of speaking. The implication of such a concept for a theory of verbal art is this: it is no longer necessary to begin with artful texts, identified on independent formal grounds and then reinjected into situations of use, in order to conceptualize verbal art in communicative terms. Rather, in terms of the approach being developed here, performance becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication.

Some examples may be useful at this point, to demonstrate in empirical terms the application of the notion of performance we have proposed. In several of her writings on the people of the plateau area of the Malagasy Republic (Keenan 1973, 1974), Elinor Keenan delineates the two major ways of speaking identified by this group. The first, called in native terminology resaka, may be loosely defined as informal conversation, described by native elders as 'everyday talk,' or 'simple talk.' The other way of speaking, kabary, is the one of principal interest to us here. Kabary is glossed by Keenan as 'ceremonial speech, what we might call oratory.' The following are excerpts from Keenan's description:

> Kabary as a focal point of tradition and as a focal point of artistic expression is...regarded with great interest. It is not uncommon to see groups of elders evaluating the skills and approaches of speechmakers following a kabary performance. A speechmaker who pleases his audience is rewarded with praise such as: 'He is a very sharp speechmaker.' 'He is prepared.' 'He is a true speechmaker, a child of his father.' His words are said to be 'well-arranged' and 'balanced.' His performance is described as 'satisfying'....Evaluations are based on both skill in handling winding speech and on one's ability to follow certain rules governing the sequence and content of particular oratory (1973:226-227).

And further, 'kabary performances...are platforms for exhibiting knowledge of traditional oratory' (1973:229). Wedding kabary, in particular, 'is the most developed art form in the culture and a source of great delight and interest to all participants' (1973:242).

It is clear from this description that kabary represents for the plateau Malagasy a domain of performance. To engage in kabary is to assume responsibility to one's audience for a display of competence in the traditional kabary forms, to render one's speech subject to evaluation for the quality of one's speaking. One is judged as a speechmaker, for the way one's words are arranged. Kabary performances are keenly attended to and actively evaluated, with good performances indeed serving as a source of enjoyment and satisfaction to the auditors, for the way they are done. The ethnography of verbal art among the plateau Malagasy thus becomes centrally the ethnography of kabary.

Among the Ilongot of the Philippines, by contrast with the above, there are three major speech styles, described by Michelle Rosaldo: the stylistically unmarked 'straight speech' (qube:nata qupu), invocatory speech (nawnaw), and a third style, qambaqan, described as 'crooked' or witty talk (Rosaldo 1973). It is not wholly clear from Rosaldo's account whether nawnaw involves performance, but qambaqan very clearly does. Qambaqan is 'artful, witty, charming,' 'a language of display, performance, pose' (Rosaldo 1973:197-198). What is especially noteworthy about speaking among the Ilongot, within our present context, is that the telling of tales, always included in a priori text-centered definitions of verbal art, is classified as a kind of 'straight speech.' That is, storytelling for the Ilongot is not a form of performance, thus in culture-specific communicative terms, not a form of verbal art. The domain of speaking among the Ilongot is to this extent, among many others, organized differently from that of the many cultures in which storytelling does involve performance.

Japanese professional storytellers, for example, as described by Hrdličková, are certainly performers in our sense of the term. For their audiences, 'it is not seldom more important how a story is told than what the story relates....Storytellers regard the mastery of [storytelling] elements as a necessary preliminary stage prior to any successful practicing of their art in public, since the audience not only expects of them an established manner of interpretation, but also rates them according to the degree of artistry the artists command (Hrdličková 1969:193, italics in the original). That is, storytelling involves a display of competence in the manner of telling the story, which is subject to evaluation for the way it is done. The audience derives enjoyment from the performance in proportion to the skill of the narrator (Idem.).

The point to be emphasized here is that just as speaking itself as a cultural system (or as part of cultural systems defined in other terms) will vary from speech community to speech community, so too will the nature and extent of the realm of performance and verbal art (Bauman 1972b). One of the principal questions one must ask in the ethnography of performance is what range of speech activity is regarded as susceptibile to performance and what range is conventionally performed, that is, conventionally expected by members of the community to be rendered in a performance mode.[9] For the St. Vincentians, for example, performance may be invoked across a very wide spectrum of speech activity, from oratory, to storytelling to gossip -- even to speaking with a speech impediment -- while the 17th century Quakers, because of basic attitudes toward speaking in general, restricted performance to an extremely narrow range of activity, (Abrahams 1970, Abrahams and Bauman 1971, Bauman 1974, 1975). In performance terms, it is not possible to assert a priori that verbal art consists of 'folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, and other "literary forms"' defined solely in formal terms (Bascom 1955:245). We will return to the culture-specific nature of verbal art as performance below.

The Keying of Performance

Before embarking upon a discussion of the further implications of the notion of performance put forward above, there is one major element integral to the conception of performance as a frame which must be delineated, i.e., the way in which framing is accomplished, or, to use Goffman's term for the process by which frames are invoked and shifted, how performance is keyed (Goffman in press). Here again, we may draw

on Bateson's powerful insight, that it is characteristic of communicative interaction that it include a range of explicit or implicit messages which carry instructions on how to interpret the other message(s) being communicated. This communication about communication Bateson termed metacommunication (Ruesch and Bateson 1968:209). In Bateson's terms, 'a frame is metacommunicative. Any message, which either explicitly or implicitly defines a frame, ipso facto gives the receiver instructions or aids in his attempt to understand the messages included within the frame (Bateson 1972:188). All framing, then, including performance, is accomplished through the employment of culturally conventionalized metacommunication. In empirical terms, this means that each speech community will make use of a structured set of distinctive communicative means from among its resources in culturally conventionalized and culture-specific ways to key the performance frame, such that all communication that takes place within that frame is to be understood as performance within that community.

An etic list of communicative means that have been widely documented in various cultures as serving to key performance is not difficult to compile. Such a list would include at least the following:

1. special codes, e.g., archaic or esoteric language, reserved for and diagnostic of performance (e.g., Toelken 1969, Sherzer 1975);

2. special formulae that signal performance, such as conventional openings and closings, or explicit statements announcing or asserting performance (e.g., Crowley 1966, Reaver 1972, Uspensky 1972:19, Babcock-Abrahams 1974);

3. figurative language, such as metaphor, metonymy, etc. (e.g., Keenan 1973, 1975, Fox 1975, Rosaldo 1973, Sherzer 1975);

4. formal sytlistic devices, such as rhyme, vowel harmony, other

forms of parallelism (Jakobson 1966, 1968, Stankiewicz 1960:15, Austerlitz 1960, Gossen 1972, 1975, Fox 1975, Sherzer and Sherzer 1972);

5. special prosodic patterns of tempo, stress, pitch (e.g., Lord 1960, Tedlock 1972);

6. special paralinguistic patterns of voice quality and vocalization (e.g., Tedlock 1972, McDowell 1974).

The formal and conventional nature of the devices listed above bears an important relation to the very nature of performance itself. Burke has alerted us to the power of formal patterns to elicit the participation of an audience through the arousal of 'an attitude of collaborative expectancy....Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation.' This 'yielding to the formal development, surrendering to its symmetry as such,' (Burke 1969[1950]:58) fixes the attention of the audience more strongly on the performer, binds the audience to the performer in a relationship of dependence that keeps them caught up in his display. A not insignificant part of the capacity of performance to transform social structure, to be discussed at the end of this paper, resides in the power that the performer derives from the control over his audience afforded him by the formal appeal of his performance.

A list of the kind given above, however, is ultimately of only limited utility, for the essential task in the ethnography of performance is to determine the culture-specific constellations of communicative means that serve to key performance in particular communities. Features such as those listed above may figure in a variety of ways in the speech economy of a community. Rhyme, for example, may be used to key performance, or it may simply be a formal feature of the language, as when it figures in certain forms of reduplication, or it may appear in speech play (which

may or may not involve performance). It may even be inadvertent. Interestingly, when this happens in English, there is a traditional formula which may be invoked to disclaim performance retroactively: 'I'm a poet and I don't know it; my feet show it, they're longfellows.' This is an indication that rhyme often does in fact key performance in English.

The basic point here is that one must determine empirically what are the specific conventionalized means that key performance in a particular community, and that these will vary from one community to another (though one may discover areal and typological patterns, and universal tendencies may exist). Let us consider some examples.

The telling of traditional folktales, or 'old stories,' in the Bahamas, as described by Daniel J. Crowley, characteristically involves performance. Narrators assume responsibility for the way they render their stories, and their performances are attended to for the enjoyment to be derived from the telling, and evaluated as displays of competence (for evidence of this see Crowley 1966:37, 137-139). Old story performances are keyed by a complex system of communicative means.

One of the most distinctive of these is the word 'Bunday,' which serves as a 'trademark' for old stories, 'since its mere mention is the sign for an old story to begin....To the Bahamians, "Bunday ain't nothing, it just mean is old story."' Crowley identifies five conventional functions served by 'Bunday' as a marker of old story performance: (1) as a means of announcing one's intention to tell a story and testing the audience's willingness to hear it; (2) as a means of recapturing audience attention (the better the storyteller, the less often he must have recourse to this device, but all storytellers must use it occasionally); (3) for emphasis and punctuation; (4) as a filler to cover pauses and other gaps in the narration; (5) as a signal that the story is ended.

In addition to 'Bunday,' storytelling performance is further signaled by opening and closing formulae. Some of these, such as 'Once upon a time, a very good time, monkey chew tobacco, and he spit white lime,' are stylistically developed in their own right, while other, like 'Once upon a time,' are more simple. Closing formulae are more individualized, with the closing 'Bunday' coming before, between or after the formula. To take one characteristic example, which brings the narrative back to the occasion of its telling: 'I was passing by, and I say "Mister Jack, how come you so smart?" And he make at me, and I run, causing me to come here tonight to tell you this wonderful story' (Crowley 1966:35-36).

The keying devices for old story performance further include special words and phrases (e.g., 'one more day than all...,' to begin a new motif), special pronunciations, elaborate onomatopoeia, and a range of metanarrational devices, such as the following of an impossible statement by 'If I was going to tell you a story,' and then another even more impossible statement (Crowley 1966:26-27). Finally, old story performance is keyed by distinctive paralinguistic and prosodic shifts for the purpose of characterization (e.g., Crowley 1966:67). In sum, this one segment of the Bahamian performance domain is keyed by a complex system of mutually reinforcing means, serving together to signal that an old story is being performed.

As we have noted, the foregoing inventory of keys to old story performance pertains to but a single genre. A full and ideal ethnography of performance would encompass the entire domain, viewing speaking and performance as a cultural system and indicating how the whole range of performance is keyed. Gary Gossen's elegant analyses of Chamula genres of verbal behavior comes closest to any work in the literature known to the

author to achieving such a description (Gossen 1972, 1975). Within the overall domain of 'people's speech' (sk'op kirsano), Chamula identify three macro-categories of speech: 'ordinary speech' (lo?il k'op), 'speech for people whose hearts are heated' (k'op sventa sk'isnah vo?nton yu?un li kirsanoe), and 'pure speech' (puru k'op). Ordinary speech is conceived of by the people as unmarked, not special in any way. It is not associated with performance. Speech for people whose hearts are heated and pure speech, on the other hand, are strongly relevant to our discussion.

As an overall category, what distinguishes speech for people whose hearts are heated from ordinary speech is that it is stylistically marked by a degree of verbatim repetition of words, phrases and metaphors, and in certain sub-categories, or genres, by parallelism in syntax and metaphorical couplets. Pure speech is distinguished in turn from speech for people whose hearts are heated by its relative fixity of form and the greater density of parallelism, either through proliferation of syntactically parallel lines or the 'stacking' of metaphorical couplets.

From Gossen's description, it is evident that repetition and parallelism constitute keys to performance for the Chamula. Both speech for people whose hearts are heated and pure speech involve the display of competence, contribute to the enhancement of experience, and are subject to evaluation for the way they are done. There is a crucial point to be made here, however. Speech for people whose hearts are heated is idiosyncratic, unfixed, and markedly less saturated with those features that signal performance. The user of speech for people whose hearts are heated is less fully accountable for a display of competence, his expression is less intensely regarded by the audience, his performance has less to contribute to the enhancement of the audience's experience than the one who

uses the forms of pure speech. The performance frame may thus be seen to operate with variable intensity in Chamula speaking.

It is worth underscoring this last point. Art is commonly conceived as an all-or-nothing phenomenon -- something either is or is not art -- but conceived as performance, in terms of an interpretive frame, verbal art may be culturally defined as varying in intensity as well as range. We are not speaking here of the relative quality of a performance -- good performance vs. bad performance -- but the degree of intensity with which the performance frame operates in a particular range of culturally defined ways of speaking. When we move beyond the first level discrimination of culturally-defined ways of speaking that do not conventionally involve performance (e.g., Chamula ordinary speech, Malagasy resaka) vs. ways of speaking that do characteristically involve performance (e.g., Chamula speech for people whose hearts are heated and pure speech, Malagasy kabary), we need to attend to the relative saturation of the performance frame attendant upon the more specific categories of ways of speaking within the community.

The variable range of performance in Chamula is confirmed by the metalanguage employed by the Chamula in their evaluation of performance. Because of the importance of the evaluative dimension of performance as communication, such metalanguages and the esthetic standards they express constitute an essential consideration in the ethnography of performance; the range of application of such esthetic systems may be the best indicator of the extent of the performance domain within a community (Dundes 1966, Babcock-Abrahams 1974). Increased fixity of form, repetition and parallelism, which serve as measures of increasing intensity of performance, also signal for the Chamula increasing 'heat.' Heat is a basic metaphor for the

Chamula, symbolizing the orderly, the good and the beautiful, by derivation from the power of the sun deity. The transition from ordinary speech to speech for people whose hearts are heated to pure speech thus involves a progressive increase in heat and therefore of esthetic and ethical value in speaking.[10]

The Patterning of Performance

Our discussion of Chamula performance has centered upon the way in which performance is keyed, the communicative means that signal that a particular act of expression is being performed. We may advance our considerations still further by recognizing that it is only as these means are embodied in particular genres that they figure in the performance system of the Chamula themselves. That is, the Chamula organize the domain of speaking in terms of genres, i.e., conventionalized message forms, formal structures that incorporate the features that key performance. The association of performance with particular genres is a significant aspect of the patterning of performance within communities. This association is more problematic than text-centered, etic approaches to verbal art would indicate (Ben-Amos 1969).

In the ethnography of performance as a cultural system, the investigator's attention will frequently be attracted first by those genres that are conventionally performed. These are the genres, like the Chamula genres of pure speech or Bahamian old stories, for which there is little or no expectation on the part of members of the community that they will be rendered in any other way. He should be attentive as well, however, for those generes for which the expectation or probability of performance is lower, for which performance is felt to be more optional, but which occasion no surprise if they are performed. A familiar example from

contemporary American society might be the personal narrative, which is frequently rendered in a simply repertorial mode, but which may well be highlighted as performance. There will, of course, in any society, be a range of verbal genres that are not rendered as performances. These will be viewed as not involving the kind of competence that is susceptible to display, not lending themselves for the enhancement of experience. Not to be forgotten are those genres that are considered by members of the community to be performance forms, but that are nevertheless not performed, as when there is no one left who is competent to perform them, or conditions for appropriate performance no longer exist. A related phenomenon is what Hymes calls performance in a perfunctory key (personal communication), in which the responsibility for a display of communicative competence is undertaken out of a sense of cultural duty, traditional obligation, but offering, because of changed circumstances, relatively little pleasure or enhancement of experience. One thinks, for example, of some masses in Latin. Such performances may, however, be a means of preserving performance forms for later reinvigoration and restoration to the level of full performance.

It should be noted with reference to the native organization of the domain of speaking and cultural expectations for performance, that the members of a community may conceptualize speech activity in terms of acts rather than genres. The St. Vincentians are a case in point (Abrahams and Bauman 1971). Speech acts and genres are, of course, analytically distinct, the former having to do with speech behavior, the latter with the verbal products of that behavior. For an oral culture, however, the distinction between the act of speaking and the form of the utterance tends characteristically not to be significant, if it is recognized at

all. Thus a particular performance system may well be organized by members of the community in terms of speech acts that conventionally involve performance, others that may or may not, and still others for which performance is not a relevant consideration.

We view the act of performance as situated behavior, situated within and rendered meaningful with reference to relevant contexts. Such contexts may be identified at a variety of levels -- in terms of settings, for example, the culturally-defined places where performance occurs. Institutions too -- religion, education, politics -- may be viewed from the perspective of the way in which they do nor do not represent contexts for performance within communities. Most important as an organizing principle in the ethnography of performance is the event, or scene, within which performance occurs (see, e.g., Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1975).

There are, first of all, events for which performance is required, for which it is a criterial attribute, such that performance is a necessary component for a particular event to count as a valid instance of the class. These will be what Singer calls 'cultural performances' (Singer 1972:71). They may be organized and conducted primarily for entertainment, such as Bahamian old story sessions, or Vincentian tea meetings, or they may have some other stated primary purpose, like Malagasy bride-price meetings, but performance will be as integral a component for the latter as for the former.

As with genres and acts, there are other events for which performance is an optional feature, not necessary or invariably expected, but not unexpected or surprising, as when someone tells jokes at a party. Again, there will be a further range of events in which performance is extraneous, not a relevant variable insofar as people categorize and participate in the events of their culture.

The structure of performance events is a product of the interplay of many factors, including setting, act sequence, and ground rules of performance. These last will consist of the set of cultural themes and social-interactional organizing principles that govern the conduct of performance (Bauman and Sherzer 1975:Section III). As a kind of speaking, performance will be subject to a range of community ground rules that regulate speaking in general, but there will also be a set of ground rules specific to performance itself. Basic too to the structure of performance events are the participants, performer(s) and audience. Performance roles constitute a major dimension of the patterning of performance within communities.

As with events, certain roles will incorporate performance as a definitive attribute. Performance is necessary to establish oneself in the role, such that one cannot be considered an incumbent of the role without being a performer of verbal art, like the sgealai, the traditional Irish storyteller (Delargy 1946). Other roles may be more loosely associated with performance, such that members of the community have a certain expectation of performance from a person in a particular role, but it is neither required of everyone in the role, nor surprising when it does not occur. Salesmen may serve as an example here, in that there is a loose expectation in contemporary American culture that salesmen are often good performers of jokes, but no one requires or expects this skill on the part of all salesmen. And, as above, other roles will have nothing to do with performance, either as definitive criterion or optional attribute.

Eligibility for and recruitment to performance roles vary cross-culturally in interesting ways. One dimension along which this variation occurs has to do with conceptions of the nature of the competence required

of a performer and the way such competence is acquired. Does it, for example, require special aptitude, talent or training? Among the Limba, storytelling is a form of performance, but it is not considered to require the special talent called for in drumming and dancing. Anyone is a potential storyteller, and it calls for no special training to become one (Finnegan 1967:69-70). By contrast, the Japanese storytellers who perform rakugo or kodan must undergo a long and arduous period of training and apprenticeship before they are considered ready to practice their art (Hrdličková 1969).

Also to be taken into account in the analysis of performance roles is the relatinship, both social and behavioral, between such roles and other roles played by the same individual. We have in mind here the way and extent to which the role of performer and the behavior associated with it may dominate or be subordinate to the other roles he may play. To illustrate one extreme possibility, we may cite Keil's assertion that in Afro-American society the role of bluesman assimilates or overshadows all other roles an adult male may normally be expected to fulfill (Keil 1966:143, 153-155). Sammy Davis, Jr. tellingly reveals the encompassing power of his role as entertainer in his statement that, 'as soon as I go out the front door of my house in the morning, I'm on, Daddy, I'm on' (quoted in Messinger et al 1962:98-99).

The foregoing list of patterning factors for performance has been presented schematically, for analytical and presentational convenience, but it should not be taken as a mere checklist. It should be self-evident that performance genres, acts, events, and roles cannot occur in isolation, but are mutually interactive and interdependent. Any of the above factors may be used as a point of departure or point of entry into the description

and analysis of the performance system of a community, but the ultimate ethnographic statement one makes about performance as part of social life must incorporate them all in some degree. It will be useful to consider one extended example here, drawn from Joel Sherzer's description of three major ceremonial traditions of the San Blas Cuna, to give some indication how the organizing features of a performance system fit together in empirical terms (Sherzer 1975).

Abstracting from Sherzer's rich description of the three traditions, we may note that each is associated with a type of event, within which specific functionaries perform particular genres in a characteristic performance mode. Thus, in the type of congress known as omekan pela (the women and everybody) the chiefs (sakla) chant (namakke) long chants called pap ikar. The chants, in turn, are interpreted to the assembled participants in the congress house by special spokesmen (arkar), whose speaking (sunmakke) also involves performance, though different from that of the chiefs. In curing rituals, a special ikar-knower (ikar wisit) speaks (sunmakke) the particular curing chant (each a type of ikar) for which he is a specialist and which is called for by the ailment from which the patient is suffering. In the third type of event, the girls' puberty ceremony, the specialist (kantule) in girls' puberty chants (kantur ikar) shouts (kormakke) the chants for the participants. The three performance traditions may be summarized in tabular form thus:

EVENT	ACT	ROLE	GENRE
congress (omekan pela)	chant (namakke) speak (sunmakke)	chief (sakla) spokesman (arkar)	chief's chant (pap ikar) interpretation
curing ritual	speak (sunmakke)	special ikar-knower (ikar wisit)	medicine chant (kapur ikar, kurkin ikar, etc.

EVENT	ACT	ROLE	GENRE
girls' puberty ceremony	shout (kormakke)	specialist in girls' puberty chant (kantule)	girls' puberty chant (kantur ikar)

For each ceremony or ritual to count as a valid instance of its class, the appropriate form must be rendered in the appropriate way by the appropriate functionary. That namakke, the sunmakke of the arkar's interpretation and the sunmakke of the medicine chants, and kormakke all represent ways of performing for the Cuna is clear from Sherzer's description. All four roles, sakla, arkar, ikar wisit and kantule are defined in essential part in terms of competence in these specific ways of performing their respective genres. There is thus, in these ceremonial traditions, a close and integral relationship between performance and specific events, acts, roles and genres, and the configuration created by the interrelationships among these factors must be close to the center of an ethnography of performance among the Cuna.

Constellations such as Sherzer describes, involving events, acts, genres, and roles in highly structured and predictable combinations, constitute the nucleus of an ethnography of performance among the Cuna, and are aptly made the focus of Sherzer's paper. However, it is crucial to establish that not all performance related to the system Sherzer describes is captured within the framework of conventional interrelationships outlined above. We have noted, for example, that the performance of curing ikar by the ikar-wisit has its conventional locus in the curing ritual; such performance is obligatory for the ikar wisit to fulfill the demands of his role and for the curing ritual to be conducted at all. Against this background, then, it is noteworthy that the ikar-wisit may also be asked to perform his ikar during a chicha festival associated with the girls'

puberty rites, purely for entertainment. That is, the performance that has its primary place in a particular context, in which it is obligatory, may be an optional feature of another kind of event, extended to the latter because of the esthetic enjoyment to be derived from it. The association between performer and genre is maintained, but the context, and of course the function, are different.

Though optional, the performance or curing ikar at puberty rite festivities is no less institutionalized than the obligatory performance of these chants in curing rituals. There is no surprise or novelty in the performance of curing ikar at the chicha festivals. Beyond the institutionalized system, however, lies one of the most important outlets for creative vitality within the performance domain. Consider the following circumstance, involving a group of small girls whom Sherzer was using as linguistic informants. On one occasion, knowing that he was interested in the performance forms of the community, the little girls launched spontaneously into a rendition of an arkar's performance as they were being recorded (Sherzer, personal communication). The remarkableness of this is apparent when one considers that the role of arkar is restricted to adult men, and performances of the kind the girls imitated belonged, in conventional terms, to the congress and the congress house. Though the little girls' rendition was framed as imitation, a reframing of the arkar's performance, it constituted performance in its own right as well, in which the girls assumed responsibility to an audience for a display of competence.

Consider one further observation made by Sherzer in his study of the Cuna. The congresses (omekan pela) discussed above, in which the chiefs chant their pap ikar and the arkars interpret them to the audience, are

held in the congress house during the evening. During the daytime, however, when congresses are not in session, individuals who find themselves in the congress house may occasionally sit in a chief's hammock and launch into an attempt at a chief's chant, just for the fun of it (Sherzer, personal communication). Here we have what is a conventional performance doubly reframed as imitation and more importantly as play, in which there is no assumption of responsibility for a display of communicative competence, nor any assumption of responsibility for or susceptibility to evaluation for the way in which the act of expression is done.

What are the implications of these two circumstances? The little girls' performance of an arkar's interpretation represents a striking instance of the use of an element from the conventional, structured performance system of the community in a novel, creative and unexpected way to fashion a new kind of performance. The playful imitation of the chief's chant involves the reframing of what is conventionally a performance genre into another mode of communication -- in this case the performance genre is not performed but is rendered in another frame.[11] In both cases, the participants are using the structured, conventional performance system itself as a resource for creative manipulation, as a base on which a range of communicative transformations can be wrought (cf. Sacks 1974). The structured system stands available to them as a set of conventional expectations and associations, but these expectations and associations are further manipulated in innovative ways, by fashioning novel performances outside the conventional system, or working various transformational adaptations which turn performance into something else. This is a very poorly documented aspect of performance systems, but one richly deserving of study, as a key to the creative vitality and flexibility of performance in a community.

The Emergent Quality of Performance

By stressing the creative aspect of optative performance, and the normative, structured aspect of conventional performance, we do not mean to imply that the latter is fixed and frozen while creativity is confined to the former. Rather, the argument developed up to this point to highlight creativity in the use of the performance frame itself as a resource for communication provides the entree for the final theme to be developed in this paper, the emergent quality of all performance.[12] The concept of emergence is necessary to the study of performance as a means toward comprehending the uniqueness of particular performances within the context of performance as a generalized cultural system in a community (cf. Georges 1969:319). The ethnographic construction of the structured, conventionalized performance system standardizes and homogenizes description, but all performances are not the same, and one wants to be able to appreciate the individuality of each, as well as the community-wide patterning of the overall domain.

The emergent quality of performance resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants, within the context of particular situations. We consider as resources all those aspects of the communication system available to the members of a community for the conduct of performance. Relevant here are the keys to performance, genres, acts, events, and ground rules for the conduct of performance that make up the structured system of conventionalized performance for the community. The goals of the participants include those that are intrinsic to performance -- the display of competence, the focusing of attention on oneself as performer, the enhancement of experience -- as well as the other desired ends toward

which performance is brought to bear; these latter will be highly culture- and situation-specific. Relative competence, finally, has to do with relative degrees of proficiency in the conduct of performance.

One of the first works to conceptualize oral literature in terms of emergent structures was Albert Lord's influential book, The Singer of Tales (1960), a study of Serbo-Croatian oral epic poetry for the light it sheds on the classic Homeric epic. Consider the following passage:

> Whether the performance takes place at home, in the coffee house, in the courtyard, or in the halls of a noble, the essential element of the occasion of singing that influences the form of the poetry is the variability and instability of the audience.
>
> The instability of the audience requires a marked degree of concentration on the part of the singer in order that he may sing at all; it also tests to the utmost his dramatic ability and his narrative skill in keeping the audience as attentive as possible. But it is the length of a song which is most affected by the audience's restlessness. The singer begins to tell his tale. If he is fortunate, he may find it possible to sing until he is tired without interruption from the audience. After a rest he will continue, if his audience still wishes. This may last until he finishes the song, and if his listeners are propitious and his mood heightened by their interest, he may lengthen his tale, savoring each descriptive passage. It is more likely that, instead of having this ideal occasion the

> singer will realize shortly after beginning that his audience is not receptive, and hence he will shorten his song so that it may be finished within the limit of time for which he feels the audience may be counted on. Or, if he misjudges, he may simply never finish the song. Leaving out of consideration for the moment the question of the talent of the singer, one can say that the length of the song depends upon the audience (Lord 1960:16-17).

The characteristic context for the performance of the oral epics that Lord describes is one in which the singer competes for the attention of his audience with other factors that may engage them, and in which the time available for performance is of variable duration. The epic form is remarkably well-suited to the singer's combined need for fluency and flexibility. The songs are made up of ten-syllable end-stopped lines with a medial caesura after the fourth syllable. In attaining competence, the singer must master a personal stock of line and half-line formulas for expressing character, action, and place, develop the capacity to generate formulaic expressions on the model of his fixed formulas, and learn to string together his lines in the development of the narrative themes out of which his epic songs are bui.t. The ready-madeness of the formulas makes possible the fluency required under performance conditions, while the flexibility of the form allows the singer to adapt his performance to the situation and the audience, making it longer and more elaborate, or shorter and less adorned, as audience response, his own mood, and time constraints may dictate. And of course, the poetic skill of the singer is a factor in how strongly he can attract and hold the attention of the

audience, how sensitively he can adapt their mood, and how elaborate he can make his song if conditions allow. Lord recorded sung versions of the same narratives from the same singer and from different singers that varied in length by as much as several thousand lines.

Ultimately, one of Lord's chief contributions is to demonstrate the unique and emergent quality of the oral text, composed in performance. His analysis of the dynamics of the tradition sets forth what amounts to a generative model of epic performance. Although it has been argued that perhaps all verbal art is generated anew in the act of performance (Maranda 1972), there is also ample evidence to show that rote memorization and insistence on word-for-word fidelity to a fixed text do play a part in the performance system of certain communities (see, e.g., Friedman 1961). The point is that completely novel and completely fixed texts represent the poles of an ideal continuum, and that between the poles lies the range of emergent text structures to be found in empirical performance. The study of the factors contributing to the emergent quality of the oral literary text promises to bring about a major reconceptualization of the nature of the text, freeing it from the apparent fixity it assumes when abstracted from performance and placed on the written page, and placing it within an analytical context which focuses on the very source of the empirical relationship between art and society (cf. Georges 1969:324).

Other aspects of emergent structure are highlighted in Elinor Keenan's ethnography of the Malagasy marraige kabary,[13] an artful oratorical negotiation surrounding a marriage request (Keenan 1973). The kabary is conducted by two speechmakers, one representing the boy's family and one the girl's. The boy's speaker initiates each step of the kabary, which is

then evaluated by the speaker for the girl. The latter may indicate that he agrees with and approves of that step, urging his opposite number on to the next, or he may state that the other's words are not according to tradition, that he has made an error in the kabary. The boy's speaker must then be able to justify what he has said, to show that no error has been made, or, if he admits error, he must correct it by repeating the step the right way and paying a small fine to the girl's family.

Keenan discovered, however, that there is no one unified concept of what consitutes a correct kabary shared by all members of the community. Rather, there are regional, familial, generational, individual and other differences of conception and style. This being so, how is it decided what constitutes an error? There is, first of all, a preliminary meeting between the families, often with their respective speechmakers present, to establish the ground rules for the kabary. These are never fully conclusive, however, and it is a prominent feature of the kabary that arguments concerning the ground rules occur throughout the event, which appeals to the preliminary neogtiations becoming simply one set of the range of possible appeals to establish authoritative performance.

Much of the impetus toward argument derives from conflicting pressures on the boy's speechmaker, who is obliged to admit to a certain range of errors, out of courtesy to the girl's family, but who is at the same time actuated by the motives of good performance, i.e., to establish his virtuosity as a performer. The girl's speechmaker, desirous of representing the family to best advantage, is likewise concerned to display his own skill as speechmaker.

The arguments, as noted, concern the ground rules for the kabary, with each party insisting on the obligatoriness of particular rules and

features by appeal to various standards, drawn from pre-kabary negotiation, generational, regional and other stylistic differences. Of particular interest is the fact that the strength of the participants' insistence on the rightness of their own way, their structural rigidity, is a function of the mood of the encounter, increasing as the tension mounts, decreasing as a settlement is approached. Ultimately, however, the practical goal of establishing an alliance between the two families involved takes precedence over all the speechmakers' insistence upon the conventions of kabary performance and their desire to display their performance skills; if the kabary threatens the making of the alliance, many are willing to reject the rules entirely to accomplish the larger goal.

The most striking feature of the marriage request kabary as described by Keenan is the emergent structure of the performance event itself. The ground rules for performance, as negotiated and asserted by the participants, shift and fluctuate in terms of what they bring to the event and the way it proceeds once under way. This is an extreme case, in which the competitive dimension and conflicting pressures make for an especially variable and shifting event structure, but here again the question is one of degree rather than kind, for all but the most ideally stereotyped of performance events will have discernably variable features of act sequence and/or ground rules for performance. The emergent structure of performance events is of special interest under conditions of change, as participants adapt established patterns of performance to new circumstances (Darnell 1975).

In addition to text and event structure, we may uncover a third kind of structure emergent in performance, namely, social structure. To be

sure, the emergent quality of social structure is not specific to situations involving performance. Indeed, there is an important line of inquiry in contemporary sociology which concerns itself with the creation of social structures in the course of and through all social interaction.

The principle addressed here is related to Raymond Firth's articulation, some years ago, of the distinction between social structure and social organization, in which the former is an abstract conception of ideal patterns of group relations, of conventional expectations and arrangements, and the latter has to do with 'the systematic ordering of social relations by acts of choice and decision' in concrete activity. In Firth's terms, social organizaiton is the domain of 'variation from what has happened in apparently similar circumstances in the past.... Structural forms set a precedent and provide a limitation to the range of alternatives possible...but it is the possiblity of alternatives that makes for variability. A person chooses, consciously or unconsciously, which course he will follow' (Firth 1961:40).

What is missing from Firth's formulation is the centrality of situated social interaction as the context in which social organization, as an emergent, takes form. The current focus on the emergence of social structures in social interaction is principally the contribution of ethnomethodology, the work of Garfinkel, Cicourel, Sacks and others. For these sociologists, 'the field of sociological analysis in anywhere the sociologist can obtain access and can examine the way the "social structure" is a meaningful ongoing accomplishment of members' (Phillipson 1972:162). To these scholars too is owed, in large part, the recognition that language is a basic means through which social realities are inter subjectively constituted and communicated (Phillipson 1972:140). From

this perspective, insofar as performance is conceived of as communicative interaction, one would expect aspects of the social structure of the interaction to be emergent from the interaction itself, as in any other such situation. Rosaldo's explication of the strategic role-taking and role-making she observed in the course of a meeting to settle a dispute over brideprice among the Ilongot illuminates the emergent aspect of social structure in that event quite clearly (Rosaldo 1973). The conventions of such meetings and the oratorical performances of the interactants endow the interaction with a special degree of formalization and intensity, but the fact that artistic verbal performance is involved is not functionally related to the negotiation of social structure on the level Rosaldo is concerned with, which has to do with such matters as the rhetorical strategies and consequences of taking the role of father in a particular event to place your interlocutor in the role of son, with its attendant obligations.

There is, however, a distinctive potential in performance by its very nature which has implications for the creation of social structure in performance. It is part of the essence of performance that it offers to the participants a special enhancement of experience, bringing with it a heightened intensity of communicative interaction which binds the audience to the performer in a way that is specific to performance as a mode of communication. Through his performance, the performer elicits the participative attention and energy of his audience, and to the extent that they value his performance, they will allow themselves to be caught up in it. When this happens, the performer gains a measure of prestige and control over the audience -- prestige because of the demonstrated competence he has displayed, control because the determination of the

flow of the interaction is in his hands. When the performer gains control in this way, the potential for transformation of the social structure may become available to him as well (Burke 1969[1950]:58-59). The process is manifest in the following passage from Dick Gregory's autobiography:

> I got picked on a lot around the neighborhood... I guess that's when I first began to learn about humor, the power of a joke....
>
> At first...I'd just get mad and run home and cry when the kids started. And then, I don't know just when, I started to figure it out. They were going to laugh anyway, but if I made the jokes they'd laugh <u>with</u> me instead of <u>at</u> me. I'd get the kids off my back, on my side. So I'd come off that porch talking about myself....
>
> Before they could get going, I'd knock it out first, fast, knock out those jokes so they wouldn't have time to set and climb all over me...And they started to come over and listen to me, they'd see me coming and crowd around me on the corner....
>
> Everything began to change then...The kids began to expect to hear funny things from me, and after a while I could say anything I wanted. I got a reputation as a funny man. And then I started to turn the jokes on them (Gregory 1964:54-55, italics in the original).

Through performance, Gregory is able to take control of the situation, creating a social structure with himself at the center. His first performances are ones in which he takes control by the artful use of the deprecatory humor that the other boys had formerly directed at him.

The joking is still at his own expense, but he has transformed the situation, through performance, into one in which he gains admiration for his performance skills. Then, building on the control he gains through performance, he is able, by strategic use of his performance skills, to transform the situation still further, turning the humor aggressively against those who had earlier victimized him. In a very real sense, Gregory emerges from the performance encounters in a different social position vis-à-vis the other boys from the one he occupied before he began to perform, and the change is a consequence of his performance in those encounters.

Conclusion

The consideration of the power inherent in performance to transform social structures opens the way to a range of additional considerations concerning the role of the performer in society. Perhaps there is a key here to the persistently documented tendency for performers to be both admired and feared -- admired for their artistic skill and power and for the enhancement of experience they provide, feared because of the potential they represent for subverting and transforming the status quo. Here too may lie a reason for the equally persistent association between performers and marginality or deviance, for in the special emergent quality of performance the capacity for change may be highlighted and made manifest to the community (see, e.g., Abrahams and Bauman 1971 and n.d., Azadowskii 1926:23-25, Glassie 1971:42-52, Szwed 1971:157-165). If change is conceived of in opposition to the conventionality of the community at large, then it is only appropriate that the agents of that change be placed away from the center of that conventionality, on the margins of society. These

are intriguing questions, and worthy of study, but they lie beyond the scope of the present paper. The first task is the ethnography of performance itself.

Notes

[1]In the development of the ideas presented in this essay I have profited greatly from discussions with many colleagues and students over the past several years, among whom Barbara Babcock-Abrahams, Dan Ben-Amos, Marcia Herndon, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, John McDowell, Norma McLeod, Américo Paredes, Dina Sherzer and Beverly Stoeltje deserve special mention and thanks. My greatest debt, however, is to the three individuals who have stimulated and influenced my thinking most profoundly: Dell Hymes, for imparting to me the ethnographic perspective on verbal art and for his ideas on the nature of performance; Roger D. Abrahams, for focusing my attention on performance as an organizing principle for the study of folklore; and Joel Sherzer for sharing in the intellectual process all along the way.

[2]Particularly important for folklorists is the seminal essay by Jansen (1957), and Lomax 1968, Abrahams 1968 and 1972. Two collections which reflect the performance orientation are Paredes and Bauman 1972 and Ben-Amos and Goldstein 1974. Bauman and Sherzer 1975 reflects a wider performance orientation, of which performance in verbal art is one aspect. Singer 1958a, 1958b and 1972 represent the perspective of an anthropologist on 'cultural performances.' Colby and Peacock 1973 contains a section on Performance Analysis which, however, ignores the work of folklorists in this field, an omission which is perhaps to be expected in an article on narrative which announces its deliberate neglect of folklore journals.

[3]The term 'spoken art' was suggested by Thomas Sebeok in discussion of Bascom's ideas on verbal art (Bascom 1955:246 n.9). See also Dorson 1972:9.

[4] Richard Ohmann, in two recent articles, employs the same passage from Austin as a point of departure for the formulation of a theory of literature based on Austin's theory of speech acts (Ohmann 1971, 1972). Ohmann's argument is interesting in places, but its productiveness is severly limited by his failure -- like Austin's -- to recognize that the notion of strictly referential, 'literal' meaning has little, if any, relevance to the use of spoken language in social life. For a strong critique of the concept of 'ordinary language,' and the impoverishing effect it has on definitions of literature, see Fish 1973.

[5]The notion of frame, though not necessarily the term, is used in a similar manner by other writers: see, e.g., Huizinga 1955, Milner 1955: 86, Smith 1968, Uspensky 1972, Fish 1973:52-53.

[6]Concerning the ecological model of communication underlying this formulation, are Sherzer and Bauman 1972 and Bauman and Sherzer 1975.

[7]Note that it is susceptibility to evaluation that is indicated here; in this formulation the status of an utterance as performance is independent of how it is evaluated, whether it is judged good or bad, beautiful or ugly, etc. A bad performance is nonetheless a performance. On this point, see Hymes 1973:189-190.

[8]I have been influenced in this formulation by Hymes 1974, Hymes 1975, d'Azevedo 1958:706, Mukařovský 1964:19, Mukařovský 1970:21, and Goffman in press. A similar conception of performance is developed in an unfinished paper by my former colleague Joseph Doherty (Doherty MS.), whose recent tragic and untimely death occurred before he was able to complete his work, and prevented me from benefiting from discussions we planned but never

had. Elli Köngäs Maranda seems to be operating in terms of a conception of verbal art which is similar in certain central respects to the one developed here (Maranda 1975:6). Compare also Fish's conception of literature (Fish 1973).

A special word should be said of the use of 'competence' and 'performance' in the above formulation. Use of these terms, especially in such close juxtaposition, demands at least some acknowledgement of Noam Chomsky's contribution of both to the technical vocabulary of linguistics (Chomsky 1965:3-4). It should be apparent, however, that both terms are employed in a very different way in the present work -- competence in the sense advanced by Hymes (1971), and performance as formulated on page seven, above.

[9]The aspect of conventionality will be discussed below.

[10]Ethics and esthetics are not always as coterminous as Gossen suggests, in summing up his analysis of the Chamula. In St. Vincent, for example, the domain 'talking nonsense' is negatively valued in terms of ethics, but encompasses a range of speech activities with a strong performance element about them that is highly valued and much enjoyed in esthetic term (Abrahams and Bauman 1971). Real, as against ideal, moral systems often accommodate more disreputability than anthropologists give them credit for, and the association between performance and disreputability has often been remarked (see Abrahams and Bauman n.d.). Another case that underscores the complexity of the relationship between ethics and esthetics is that of the seventeenth century Quakers, for whom fundamental moral principles against putting oneself forward, speaking things that were in a strict sense 'not the truth,' and gratifying the earthly man, severely

limited the potential and actual domain of artistic verbal performance, leaving but a few very special kinds of outlets for performance at all (Bauman 1970, 1974, 1975). The whole matter of the relationship between ethics and esthetics is one that badly needs investigation from an anthropological point of view.

[11]Hymes (1974) applies the term 'metaphrasis' to this phenomenon.

[12]The concept of emergence is developed in McHugh 1968. The emergent quality of performance is emphasized in Hymes 1974.

[13]Kabary designates both a way of speaking and the forms in which it is manifested.

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